IN THE CLAIMS

Kindly change the claims as shown below.

1-24 (canceled)

25. (Currently amended) An optical device, comprising:

a first waveguide;

a second waveguide coupled to the first waveguide via a first bi-directional, polarization dependent path;

a third waveguide coupled to the first waveguide via a second bi-directional, polarization dependent path;

a single Wollaston prism disposed on the first and second bi-directional, polarization dependent paths, the first and second bi-directional, polarization dependent paths overlapping between the first waveguide and the Wollaston prism; and

a first converging optical subsystem disposed to couple light between the second waveguide and the Wollaston prism and between the third waveguide and the Wollaston prism, the first converging optical subsystem including at least one focusing element common to the first and the second bi-directional, polarization dependent paths, the first and second paths being substantially collimated between the Wollaston prism and the first converging optical subsystem.

26. (Original) The optical device as recited in Claim 25, wherein the first converging optical subsystem includes a lens.

27. (Original) The optical device as recited in Claim 25, further comprising a second converging optical subsystem coupling light between the first waveguide and the Wollaston prism.

28. (Original) The optical device as recited in Claim 27, wherein the first and second converging optical subsystems have a common focal distance, f, and the first

waveguide is separated by approximately the focal distance, f, from the second optical subsystem, the first optical subsystem is separated approximately the focal distance, f, from the Wollaston prism, and the first optical subsystem is separated approximately the focal distance, f, from at least the second waveguide.

29. (Original) The optical device as recited in Claim 25 wherein light propagating in the second waveguide is polarized.

30. (Original) The optical device as recited in Claim 25, wherein light propagates along the first bi-directional, polarization dependent path from the first waveguide to the second waveguide.

31. (Currently amended) The optical device as recited in Claim 25, wherein light propagates along the first bi-directional, polarization dependent path from the second waveguide to the first waveguide.

32. (Original) The optical device as recited in Claim 25, wherein the Wollaston prism is formed from a crystalline material selected from the group of yttrium ortho-vanadate (YVO_4), lithium niobate ($LiNbO_3$), α-BBO (BaB_2O_4), TeO_2, and rutile (TiO_2).

33-55 (Canceled)

56. (Currently amended) A method of coupling light between a first waveguide and second and third waveguides, comprising:

propagating the light along bi-directional, polarization-dependent free-space paths including propagating polarized light along a first path between the first and second waveguides and propagating polarized light, polarized orthogonally relative to light propagating along the first path, along a second path between the first and third waveguides;

<u>collimating light on the first and second paths;</u> and

<u>spatially separating and bending the first and second paths, where the paths are</u> <u>collimated,</u> with a <u>single</u> Wollaston prism.

57. (Original) The method recited in Claim 56, including focusing the polarized light travelling along the first and second paths where the first and second paths are spatially separated with a focusing element common to the first and second paths.

58. (Original) The method recited in Claim 56, including directing the light propagating along the polarization-dependent paths from the first waveguide to the at least a second waveguide.

59. (Original) The method recited in Claim 56 including directing the light propagating along the polarization-dependent paths from the at least a second waveguide to the first waveguide.

60. (canceled)

61. (new) The optical device as recited in claim 25, wherein the first converging optical subsystem has first focal length and the second and third waveguides are positioned from one side of the first converging optical subsystem by a distance approximately equal to the first focal length.

62. (new) The optical device as recited in claim 61, wherein the Wollaston prism is positioned at a distance from the first converging optical subsytem by a distance approximately equal to the first focal length.

63. (new) The optical device as recited in claim 27, wherein the second converging optical subsystem has a second focal length, and the first waveguide is positioned from the second converging optical subsystem by a distance approximately equal to the second focal length.

64. (new) The optical device as recited in claim 63, wherein the Wollaston prism is positioned at a distance from the second converging optical subsytem by a distance approximately equal to the second focal length.